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Chairman: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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In the absence of Mr. Dinu (Romania), Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/46/327 and Corr.1 and Add.1; A/C.5/47/16; A/C.5/46/CRP.1)

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/47/7/Add.1; A/C.5/47/2 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/47/7)

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1. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that in principle the three delegations supported the Secretary-General's three major proposals for improving the management of the Organization, but with several caveats. The Secretariat must demonstrate through results that increased flexibility in the management of resources would lead to improved programme delivery at the least possible cost and in complete transparency. Duplication and infighting at every level must give way to a culture of economy, efficiency and accountability - there could no longer be an expectation that the General Assembly would automatically increase its assessments.

2. Australia, Canada and New Zealand agreed with the objectives of the restructuring of the Secretariat, and supported the consolidation of departments. The three delegations encouraged the Secretary-General to continue that approach, and awaited the second stage of restructuring with interest. Having themselves proposed, at the forty-sixth session, that the Secretariat should be allowed greater latitude in redeploying resources during a biennium, they agreed that the proposal made in the revised estimates (A/C.5/47/2, para. 24) was worthy of consideration.

3. The three delegations, however, had reservations, inasmuch as certain changes seemed to have resulted in a deterioration in the ability to deliver programmes. For example, the International Trade Centre had been leaderless for close to a year, and the section of the Department of Political Affairs dealing with disarmament was so short of qualified staff that it was barely operational in some high-priority areas and Member States had offered voluntary funding for activities where financing should be available under the regular budget. Such situations were linked to the assignment of many staff members to peace-keeping operations, but perhaps that practice should be reviewed if it resulted in priority programmed activities being postponed or abandoned, particularly since Member States had provided full funding and had authorized recruitment of personnel for each of the peace-keeping operations.

(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

4. On the subject of programme planning, Australia, Canada and New Zealand agreed with the Chairman of CPC that the plans, as currently written by the Secretariat, did not fulfil their role: they were dauntingly complex and the connection between the elements of the plan and the budget was so difficult to discern that it was hard to see where the money was being spent. The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had rightly advocated the adoption of a prototype of a very different type of plan, which would be a true policy document rather than an endless list of unrelated outputs. He supported the CPC suggestion that an ad hoc technical seminar should be held to consider the proposal.

5. The quality of the evaluation of programme delivery was very uneven, no doubt because there was no real requirement for programme managers to take stock of their activities periodically and see if they could carry out their objectives more effectively. The Secretariat should strengthen the advisory role supposedly played by the Management Advisory Service, as recommended by the Joint Inspection Unit.

6. The revised budget format offered the advantage of being much simpler and of eliminating artificial growth calculations. Nevertheless, the Committee was still dealing with estimates compared to estimates, and it would be helpful for the Secretariat to include a real expenditure report that was as up to date as possible. Further, the Secretariat should give full details of how inflation and currency adjustments were to be dealt with in the new procedures, since it could no longer be anticipated that a formula calculation of inflation and currency adjustments which resulted in biennium-over-biennium increases of more than 10.7 per cent would be automatically endorsed by Member States.

7. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) said that he appreciated the efforts by the Secretariat to simplify the methodology for preparing the proposed programme budget outline, as sought by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/255. He recalled that, as far as his delegation was aware, the principle of zero real growth had never been accepted in the Committee, and delegations would do better to debate the volume of resources rather than engage in endless debate on the principle of zero real growth or growth in the budget outline. His delegation supported the amount of $2,410 million proposed by the Secretary-General for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/47/358).

8. The proposed programme budget outline also raised the extremely important issue of priorities. His delegation believed that once listed as a priority, an activity must not only be allocated commensurate resources but it must be ensured that the Secretariat executed it. Since the five priorities proposed in the medium-term plan for 1992-1997 had been endorsed by the General Assembly, it was surprising that the Secretary-General was proposing additional priorities at such an early stage of the plan's implementation. His delegation felt very strongly that the 1994-1995 proposed programme budget should be inspired by the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

(Mr. Chuinkam, Cameroon)

9. The Secretary-General had also stated in the budget outline that he did not foresee any significant changes in staffing levels, and that any additional requirements during 1994-1995 should be met through redeployments. His delegation was not against that approach, but trusted that such redeployments would be in conformity with the current rules and would not adversely affect programme execution.

10. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain the contingency fund at 0.75 per cent of the overall level of resources.

11. Extrabudgetary financing was becoming increasingly common. It was a means whereby rich Member States could finance those activities they cherished, to the neglect of those programmed by all Member States of the Organization. The practice was questionable inasmuch as certain States which utilized extrabudgetary financing owed huge sums to the regular budget, and as such tied contributions helped to ruin the already meagre finances of executing agencies by making them pay for part of the delivery costs. It was regrettable that the States in question were able to impose activities on the United Nations while shying away from assuming full financial responsibility, whereas many Member States that made sacrifices to contribute to the regular budget would also like to take part in deciding how their contributions should be spent and in determining the priority of different activities.

12. Mr. MIHAI (Romania) said that by and large his delegation concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of CPC. Romania had a particular interest in the programme on regional cooperation for development in Europe and supported the recommendation that the programme should be approved in its revised form, for the new narrative captured better the profound transformations which were taking place in the countries moving towards a market economy. Given the impact of those changes on the structure of trade throughout Europe, his delegation hoped that the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) would try to find solutions for the economic problems of the countries directly concerned. The Commission should in particular facilitate the integration of those countries in the regional division of labour. If, as the Secretariat proposed, action was also to be taken at the subregional level, it should certainly be focused on the Black Sea region, where the envisaged cooperation was of interest to more than 10 countries.

13. It was important to restructure the State-owned industrial sector and the privatization process. His delegation hoped that ECE would join the many bodies which were advising the countries of the region in those areas. It also proposed that training courses and seminars should be organized on the development of small businesses as a catalyst for the general economic growth of the countries concerned.

14. Romania shared the view that it was good for decisions on important items to be taken by consensus and was ready to support the revised estimates submitted by the Secretary-General for the biennium 1992-1993.

15. Mr. GOUDYMA (Ukraine) said that his delegation hoped that the restructuring of the Secretariat, which was a vital part of the overall reform and revitalization of the United Nations, would enable the Organization to perform its functions more efficiently and that it would thus be better able to promote peace and security and solve world problems in the socio-economic and environmental fields. Several delegations had stressed the importance of the redeployment of posts among the Secretariat's various administrative units. The redeployment ought to make it possible to focus action on the priority areas identified by the international community. In that context an effort should be made inter alia to improve the method used to determine the optimal workload of staff and assess the degree of efficiency in the performance of duties. That process ought logically to lead to the identification and elimination of outdated or superfluous programmes.

16. The recruitment of Professional staff for field offices and their assignment to priority programmes were also essential aspects of the reform. In that connection his delegation attached great importance to renewal of the Secretariat staff. In order to ensure renewal the recruitment freeze must be ended and a fair balance established between permanent and fixed-term posts.

17. With regard to the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/47/358) his delegation wished to emphasize that the figures must reflect the general trends in the world and the increased attention given to certain questions. That presupposed close contacts between the Secretariat and Member States so that the opinions of Governments could be duly taken into consideration in Secretariat documents. CPC had an important role to play in that regard.

18. The report of the Secretary-General stated that the methodology of the outline had been simplified. In his delegation's opinion it still had some imperfections, for example with regard to recurrent and non-recurrent expenditure, procurement costs, the calculation of real growth, etc. Furthermore, whatever method was used, his delegation still subscribed to the principle of zero budget growth. The amounts approved for the budget might be lower than those appearing in the outline. They must in no case be higher.

19. With regard to the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 his delegation thought that the Secretariat had done useful work in establishing a prototype of a new budget format (A/C.5/47/3). That initiative would make it possible to simplify the presentation of the budget and to make the document clearer for all users. Particular attention should be given to part I of the budget, i.e. the introduction. By and large his delegation supported the proposals made in paragraph 8 of the report, which described the elements which should appear in the introduction. It thought nevertheless that mention should be made not only of new activities and programmes but also of the main obstacles encountered in the existing programmes. The proposal that some sections of the budget should be consolidated to bring them into line with the medium-term plan was an interesting one. In addition to facilitating comparisons between the budget and the plan, that solution would contribute to greater flexibility in resource management and would bring out more clearly the responsibility of programme managers for the use of resources.

20. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina), speaking on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, said that they welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to make the Organization more efficient by means of a restructuring exercise whose financial implications were the main element in the revised estimates. However, they wished to emphasize the importance of spelling out more clearly the impact of the ongoing reform on programme implementation, of not losing sight of the goals set by the General Assembly in resolution 46/232, and striking a fair balance between flexibility and transparency in the use of the Organization's resources.

21. In resolution 46/232 the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report at the earliest opportunity on the programmatic impact and financial implications of the restructuring enterprise. Information was therefore expected about the way in which the reforms were responding to the eight aims set out in paragraph 3 of the resolution.

22. In his report on the revised estimates (A/C.5/47/2) the Secretary-General said that the abolition of 13 high-level posts ought to bring a saving of $4 million on the appropriation of $2.389 billion approved in resolution 46/186. However, he did not describe either the impact of the reform on programme implementation and the capacity of the Secretariat to discharge its responsibilities or the objectives and purpose of such a major undertaking. The promised submission by the Secretary-General of a document enabling Member States to follow the process more closely and direct it in accordance with the wishes of intergovernmental bodies was therefore awaited with interest.

23. In the same report the Secretary-General described the results of the redeployment of Professional posts decided on during the first phase of the restructuring, indicating that the arrangements currently governing the reallocation of resources among sections of the budget made it impossible to respond speedily to changing needs. The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had fortunately explained that there was no question of changing the arrangements in question but only of introducing greater flexibility in the use of human resources in the implementation of the budget. The redeployment of human resources was of course to be carried out within the framework of the Financial Regulations and the Financial Rules, and indeed with the greatest possible transparency.

24. Mr. SEIM (Norway), speaking on agenda item 105 on behalf of the five Nordic countries, generally supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on the revisions to the medium-term plan for 1992-1997. He deplored the difficult conditions in which CPC had had to conduct its work owing to the late submission of documents. The delegations of the Nordic countries noted with regret that CPC had been unable to make a recommendation on the proposed new subprogramme 4 on electoral assistance in programme 4 entitled "Special political questions, trusteeship and decolonization", and fully endorsed the revisions proposed by the Secretary-General.

(Mr. Seim, Norway)

25. The delegations of the Nordic countries believed that a simplified transparent programme planning process could contribute usefully to the reform of the Organization. The medium-term plan was one of the main instruments of the Organization's general policy-making process and was intended to serve as a framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budget. In its resolution 45/253 the General Assembly had encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to review the format of the plan with a view to improving it as a tool for managing the activities of the Organization. The delegations of the Nordic countries would wish to see a more concise document with a stronger focus on the policies of the Organization. In that respect, they supported the CPC recommendation to the effect that the Secretariat should provide it with a prototype of a possible new format of the plan at its thirty-third session in 1993.

26. The delegations of the Nordic countries deplored the fact that only a very limited number of the proposed revisions had been reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies, whose comments were essential to satisfactory programme planning. Even if many of the States members of the relevant intergovernmental bodies were also represented in CPC and the Economic and Social Council, the latter bodies could not serve as a substitute for the former, upon the basis of whose comments CPC had to proceed if it was to play an important role in the area of overall priority setting. The delegations of the Nordic countries urged the Secretariat to propose to CPC at its thirty-third session practical solutions to the deficiencies of the current consultative process.

27. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to utilize resources in the most cost-effective way and the steps taken to improve the management of the Organization. In his delegation's view, further efforts were needed in order to limit expenditures as much as possible through revision and supervision of existing programmes and elimination of projects and activities which were only marginally useful or clearly ineffective. Israel's position on the allocation of funds to activities aimed against Israel was well known. The large sums used for that purpose should instead be channelled towards the enhancement of economic and social well-being and the eradication of poverty in developing countries. His delegation would wish to see economic and development activities play a primary role in United Nations priorities. For its own part, despite the limited resources at its disposal, his country was engaging in bilateral development cooperation with many States Members of the United Nations.

28. Mr. KAIRON (India) said that his delegation broadly supported the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Secretariat's programme delivery and noted that certain proposals contained in the revised estimates had far-reaching implications for the overall functioning of the Organization. With regard to the proposals relating to restructuring and their financial implications, he noted that the consolidation of several departments into larger entities had brought the

(Mr. Kairon, India)

structure of the Secretariat out of line with the budget, thus making financial management potentially more difficult. The Secretariat had therefore proposed five new budget sections, to which some resources had been transferred as from 1 July 1992. The section structure of the budget was to be reviewed in the context of the preparation of the next programme budget. Those proposals of the Secretariat ran counter to financial regulation 3.9 which provided that supplementary programme budget proposals should be prepared in a form consistent with the approved programme budget. His delegation would appreciate an explanation on that point. It attached great importance to compliance with the rules and regulations of the Organization and recalled the recommendation made by CPC that the General Assembly should give due attention to the relationship between mandates, programmes, budget sections and the Secretariat structure (A/47/16 (Part II), para. 244).

29. His delegation would be interested to know whether the post redeployments were temporary or permanent, and, in the latter case, whether the concurrence of the General Assembly had been sought, as was required by financial regulation 4.5 and financial rule 104.4. It also hoped that the Secretariat would specify the criteria employed in making the redeployments and would supply a breakdown by section of the vacancies identified.

30. In the past, transfers of resources between sections had been relatively insignificant and had merely been reported to the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. Now, however, in view of the large number of posts involved, it was becoming difficult to approve the changes in the absence of information on their impact on the programmes.

31. The Secretariat was asking for greater flexibility in the management of financial resources on the grounds that the Secretary-General needed to redeploy resources in order to carry out new mandates. His delegation did not believe that a new mandate should necessarily have priority over existing ones. Furthermore, there were efficient and rapid procedures already in existence which addressed the question of implementation of new mandates (procedures relating to programme budget implications, revised estimates, etc.). Moreover, the new mandate related mainly to peace-keeping activities which in any case were not financed from the regular budget.

32. The impression gained from reading the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan was that the environment had become as important as, if not more important than, economic development. India attached great importance to the protection of the environment but did not believe that environmental issues should have priority over economic development. It supported those recommendations of CPC which tried to balance those two objectives. As for the programmes on trade and development, his delegation endorsed the proposals relating to the priorities between subprogrammes approved by the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD. On the question of programmes relating to political issues, his delegation considered that the new concepts presented by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (preventive

(Mr. Kairon, India)

diplomacy, good offices missions, etc.) should be included in the medium-term plan only if they had received the endorsement of the appropriate intergovernmental bodies.

33. His delegation was disappointed to find that the overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination contained no reference to efforts made by the Organization, in the spirit of Article 50 of the Charter, to redress the special economic difficulties faced by States as a result of their compliance with enforcement measures adopted by the Security Council against other States. It supported the recommendation of CPC that the Secretary-General should include information on that subject in his next overview report.

34. His delegation supported the prototype of the new budget format, which was more transparent and user-friendly. It also supported the CPC recommendation for the holding of a technical seminar to review both the utility and the size of the medium-term plan document.

AGENDA ITEM 112: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/46/326 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/47/140 and Add.1, A/47/168 and Add.1, A/47/416 and A/47/508; A/C.5/46/2, A/C.5/46/7, A/C.5/46/9, A/C.5/46/13, A/C.5/46/16, A/C.5/47/5, A/C.5/47/6, A/C.5/47/9, A/C.5/47/14 and A/C.5/47/20)

35. Mr. FLEISCHHAUER (Under-Secretary-General, The Legal Counsel), speaking on behalf of the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on respect for the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials (A/C.5/47/14). He recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/212, had stressed the absolute necessity for staff members to be able to discharge the tasks assigned to them by the Secretary-General, without interference on the part of any Member State or any other authority external to the Organization. Yet examination of earlier reports on the question led to the conclusion that disregard for the privileges and immunities of officials had always constituted one of the main obstacles to implementation of the missions and programmes assigned to the organizations of the United Nations system by their member States. At a time when the complexity of those tasks had grown substantially, respect for the privileges and immunities of staff had become an even more imperative condition for the successful accomplishment by the organizations of their mandates.

36. During the reporting period, the organizations of the United Nations system had become increasingly involved in world-wide operations, which sometimes took place in hostile terrain. It went without saying that the question of the safety and security of staff had acquired particular importance. It was therefore addressed in a special section of the report. The report indicated (para. 7) that, despite all efforts to ensure security, as of its date of issuance there had been 11 fatalities among staff members belonging to different organizations. In connection with the two most recent

(Mr. Fleischhauer)

fatalities, of staff members of UNICEF in the Sudan, the Secretary-General had sent a high-level mission to the area to review the circumstances which had led to those tragic incidents.

37. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General had stressed that he was very conscious of the heavy responsibility he bore in exposing staff members to fatal danger. In that connection he drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 8 of the report, where it was stated that the primary responsibility for ensuring the security and protection of United Nations officials rested with host Governments and other governmental authorities.

38. The seriousness of the situation was illustrated by the fact that, over the reporting period, the Security Council had found it necessary to address the issue on several occasions. On 9 September 1992 the President of the Security Council, in a statement on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had underlined the urgent need to reinforce the security of the members of the United Nations Protection Force. Further, following a meeting with the Secretary-General on 25 September 1992, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council had issued a joint statement expressing their deep concern at the deteriorating conditions affecting the safety of personnel of organizations in Iraq.

39. Cases of arrest, detention and abduction had always been a matter of great concern to the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the organizations concerned. Detailed information on the cases in question was contained in paragraphs 9 to 13 of the report as well as in annex II thereto. Annex I provided a consolidated list of staff members who remained under arrest or detention or who were missing as at 30 June 1992. As in the past, most of the cases related to officials of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The number of UNRWA staff members arrested or detained over the reporting period was lower in comparison with previous years, but still remained high. Further, there had been no progress in respect of several long-standing cases referred to in paragraph 12 of the report, including the cases of two staff members who had remained in detention since 1980.

40. Paragraphs 14 to 21 contained information concerning restrictions on official and private travel by United Nations officials. It was noted with satisfaction in the report that the authorities of the United States of America had informed the Secretary-General that staff members who were nationals of the countries listed in the report would no longer be required to request permission in respect of travel in the United States. Further, procedural requirements for nationals of the Russian Federation and of Viet Nam had been simplified. The Secretary-General had welcomed those developments. With regard to nationals of Viet Nam and of the Russian Federation, the Secretary-General had felt obliged to reiterate his position of principle concerning the restrictive and discriminatory treatment of

(Mr. Fleischhauer)

certain Secretariat officials. Paragraph 14 of the report referred to the difficulties encountered by UNRWA staff members when entering and leaving the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

41. With respect to the taxation of staff members, he drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 22 to 24 of the report as well as to paragraphs 16 to 21, 24 and 26 to 29 of annex II. It was pleasing to note that the issue of taxation had been successfully resolved in two specific instances. The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to the Governments concerned.

42. Information on the steps taken by the organizations to ensure the safety and security of staff and respect for their privileges and immunities was contained in paragraphs 25 to 33 of the report. The information proved that the organizations of the United Nations system had spared no effort to protect their staff. Those efforts would be continued, and, if necessary, intensified. It should be noted that inter-agency meetings on security matters, which were currently being held on a regular basis with the participation of representatives of the staff organizations, had been especially helpful in preparing appropriate arrangements at a system-wide level.

43. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said that his delegation shared the concerns expressed regarding the security of the staff, and agreed that the Organization must have a highly qualified and motivated staff to discharge the new missions entrusted to it. Commenting on the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/47/416), he noted that as at 30 June 1992 there had been 29 unrepresented States, which could be explained by the recent increase in the membership of the Organization, and 21 underrepresented Member States. The latter figure was encouraging in that it represented a decrease from the previous year.

44. With respect to posts subject to geographical distribution, he noted that review of the system of desirable ranges established by the General Assembly had been postponed again and again. His delegation was of the opinion that the level of 5 per cent for the population factor did not contribute to an equitable distribution of posts and that the percentage should be increased.

45. Turning to the improvement of the status of women, he welcomed the fact that the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution had risen, but the small number of women in high-level posts was disappointing. More efforts needed to be made to increase the number of women in decision-making posts.

46. His delegation was aware that in February the Secretary-General had announced the suspension of external recruitment for Professional posts. The Administration had offered two posts to Indonesian nationals who had passed a national competitive examination held in Indonesia in 1989. Although Indonesia was underrepresented, those candidates had still not been recruited,

(Mr. Wibisono, Indonesia)

whereas candidates from other Member States that were within their desirable range had been. That was all the more regrettable since the holding of the examination had been costly both for the Indonesian Government and for the Organization. He requested clarification of recruitment procedures and asked what priority was actually given to candidates from underrepresented countries.

47. Mr. CARDOSO (Brazil) said that his delegation had taken note with interest of the reports of the Secretary-General on career development and on the training programme in the Secretariat. If the United Nations was to continue to play an instrumental role in meeting new demands and challenges, it must have a qualified and motivated staff. Human resources were the Organization's most valuable asset.

48. His delegation had taken note of the improvement in the status of women in the Secretariat. However modest, the trend was welcome, and he urged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to increase the number of women at all levels. Such an increase would also help to establish a better balance in the representation of all Member States in the Secretariat.

49. The competitive examinations that were held in underrepresented countries in order to fill Professional posts at the P-1 and P-2 levels were commendable. Nevertheless, in order to ensure effective career development within the United Nations, consideration should be given to career planning for staff members who were recruited at those levels.

50. Moreover, in order to ensure cultural diversity within the staff of the Organization, efforts should be made to increase the representation of Member States in Professional categories to which the principle of equitable geographical distribution did not currently apply, as well as at the highest levels of the Secretariat. In that connection he recalled the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/232: as a general rule, no national of a Member State should succeed a national of that State in a senior post and there should be no monopoly on senior posts by nationals of any State or group of States.

51. There was no conflict between the rules governing recruitment, as set forth in Article 101 of the Charter, and the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The latter principle should be adopted by the subsidiary organs listed in document A/47/416, paragraph 6.

52. With regard to the desirable ranges established for national representation, the problem which had prevented agreement lay not in the methodology for the calculation of the desirable ranges but in the relative weights given to the various factors. In particular, since 1987 the weight of the population factor had been kept at an unjustifiably low level. Other delegations had already pointed out the injustice done to Member States with large populations. In the name of the principles of fairness and equity which underlay the United Nations Charter, it was desirable for appropriate weighting to be restored to the population factor.

(Mr Cardoso, Brazil)

53. Lastly, his delegation deplored the violations of the privileges and immunities of international officials listed in document A/C.5/47/14. Every effort should be made to ensure the security and protection of the staff. He stressed that primary responsibility for such matters rested with host Governments.

54. Mr. FERJANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that personnel questions were so important because there was a direct link between the effectiveness of the Organization and the competence and loyalty of its staff, and because personnel costs represented a major portion of the Organization's budget. No attempts to reform or to improve efficiency could succeed without a reorganization of the Secretariat and its staff, hence the importance of personnel questions in the recommendations of the Group of 18, which set forth many of the principles underlying the reform process.

55. The report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/47/416) indicated that the number of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution remained relatively small, comprising only 2,608 out of a total staffing level of 31,127 staff members. Further, figure 4 revealed a substantial increase in the number of overrepresented States, which now totalled 24 as against 19 in 1988. There were still frequent appointments of staff members who were nationals of overrepresented countries; over the reporting period such appointments represented 10.2 per cent of the total number of appointments. He noted that high-level and policy-making posts within the Secretariat remained the prerogative of a certain number of countries and that no measures had been taken pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/239 to ensure the equitable representation of Member States, including developing countries, in such posts. Moreover, paragraph 26 of the report of the Secretary-General indicated that the restructuring of the Secretariat had not led to any change in the situation, since no national of a developing country or of a Member State not represented at a high-level or in a policy-making post had been appointed to such a level or post.

56. The restructuring of the Secretariat initiated by the Secretary-General must respect the provisions of the Charter and of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 35/210, 41/206, 43/224, 44/185 and 45/239, which enunciated the principles of equitable geographical distribution and of the rotation of high-level posts in an endeavour to ensure that no post became the prerogative of one State or group of States. Those principles and resolutions must be respected in order to restore balance between Member States within the Secretariat, which would happen only if there was an end to the appointment of nationals of overrepresented States, if the range of posts subject to geographical distribution was increased and if appointments were restricted to nationals of unrepresented States or of States below the mid-point of their desirable range. Moreover, nationals of States whose nationals had never held high-level posts should be appointed to such positions.

(Mr. Ferjani, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

57. His delegation noted with astonishment from document A/C.5/47/5 that competitive examinations for recruitment at the P-3 level had been held in a number of countries, but not in any developing country. He trusted that such an unjustifiable situation would be rectified. His delegation welcomed the progress made in the representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution. He trusted that such progress would be maintained and that it would extend to high-level posts, on the understanding that it should not be at the expense of the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Lastly, his delegation trusted that the efforts made by the Secretary-General to restructure the Secretariat would eliminate the shortcomings and omissions in the representation of Member States and allow the resolutions of the General Assembly and the principles set forth in the Charter to be implemented.

58. Mr. CISS (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management) bid farewell to the members of the Committee. He said that his functions would end on the following day since he had been appointed Vice-President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). He would be succeeded by Mr. Armando Duque, who had previously served as Director, Division of Administration at the United Nations Office at Geneva and who had been Secretary of the Fifth Committee for many years. He was sure that his experience would be extremely useful to the Committee. For his part, he regretted having to leave the Committee suddenly and that he would not be able to reply in person to various questions which had been raised during the debates. In any event, he was pleased that he had been able to make a modest contribution to human resources management, including through his cooperation with the Committee. Questions relating to career development, improvement of the status of women and conditions of employment were important, as were those relating to the holding of competitive examinations and the training programme. In that regard, he was pleased to announce that a voluntary contribution would shortly be paid to the training programme. He thanked the Government which had stated its intent to pay the contribution in question.

59. The CHAIRMAN, speaking on behalf of the Committee as well as on his own behalf, thanked Mr. Ciss sincerely for his endeavours in the Office of Human Resources Management to ensure that the staff could discharge their many duties under the best possible conditions. Although Mr. Ciss had occupied his post only briefly, every member of the Committee had come to appreciate his competence, his experience and his accessibility. He was convinced that Mr. Ciss would continue to do useful work and he wished him every success in his new duties.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.